REPORT TO:	Corporate Services Policy and Performance Board
DATE:	8th September 2009
REPORTING OFFICER:	Strategic Director, Corporate & Policy
SUBJECT:	The Future of Locality Working in Halton
WARDS:	Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To consider the options for sustaining the development of locality working beyond March 2010..

2.0 RECOMMENDATION:

2.1 That Executive Board is requested to consider the development of locality working based on Option 3 of the attached report.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.3 There are 3 obvious options for the future of locality working in Halton once the funding for neighbourhood management expires:

OPTION 1: Complete close-down – disband the neighbourhood management team and the boards.. Whilst this was the case with over 90% of SRB programmes, there are only two known examples of this course being adopted for Neighbourhood Management elsewhere (Chelmsleywood (Solihull) and Gospel Oak (London Borough of Camden)).

Pros:
- No continuing direct financial cost to Council or partners. This is important at a time of financial constraint where additional costs have to be met from savings elsewhere.
- Avoids confusion over the roles of elected members and resident representatives

Cons
- Leaves no arrangement explicitly aimed at closing the gap between the most deprived areas and the rest of the Borough. This will have consequences for the residents of those areas, and for the reputation of the Council (adverse reports from the Comprehensive Area Assessment and Government Office)
- Whilst there will be no direct costs, failure to address deprivation creates significant other costs for the Council and its partners in having to meet the needs of deprived households. If the goals of improved health, reduced worklessness, reduced crime and

antisocial behaviour are achieved, there will be a significantly reduced the demand on the public purse.
- Lack of partnership arrangements and engagement networks will reduce the potential for initiatives such as those recently established to address worklessness, alcohol and smoking differently in these neighbourhoods
- Residents may become harder to engage with in future if they perceive that they were abandoned once the money ran out.

OPTION 2: Transfer of the Neighbourhood Management Partnership to a third sector/charitable host/accountable body. This option has been pursued in other districts where there is an existing community development trust or tenants management organisation in the locality that already has significant capital assets.. Examples include Tranmere & Rock Ferry (Lairdside Trust) and Blacon in Chester.

Pros
- A third sector organisation may be able to access funding from sources not available to the public sector, thereby reducing direct costs.
- Provides a long term solution

Cons
- There is no existing organisation in Halton that is an obvious candidate for this approach.
- It would distance locality working from partner organisations in general
- The Council would non longer be the accountable body, so no democratically elected oversight.

OPTION 3: The development of wider more systematic or targeted locality working and community engagement arrangements across the whole Borough based on the Area Forum footprint.. The learning from local neighbourhood management pilot(s) is being used to develop this type of option in the majority of other local authority areas that have had neighbourhood |management pilots. Arrangements commonly have varying degrees of intensity between localities across the local authority area depending upon on a place's level of need/deprivation.

An example of this can be found in St Helens. where specific localities are 'targeted' but sit within a borough-wide strategic locality working framework.

Pros
- Provides a Borough wide approach that could be built around existing Area Forum arrangements .
- Provides a mechanism for more intensive efforts to close the gap in the most deprived parts of the Borough (not necessarily limited to the current Neighbourhood Management Areas)

- Would require investment by the Council and its partners to support Borough wide arrangements.
- Partners may not have the capacity to support an increase number of local partnership arrangements

4.0 CONCLUSION

4.1 There is no easy answer to the future of locality working in Halton. On the one hand, there will be a direct cost to the Council and its partners once the current grant funding has ended. This may well be more than offset by savings in service delivery costs over the long term, but those savings will not be easy to identify, and will not supply the short term funding requirements. On the other hand, traditional service delivery arrangements have failed to narrow the gap between the most deprived neighbourhoods and the rest of the Borough, whilst neighbourhood working appears to be more likely to do this.

4.2 The best solution may be to take the lessons learnt and to apply them across the whole Borough as set out in option 3 above.

4.3 Locality working is intended to help the Council and its partners to deliver the objectives in the Corporate Plan, Halton's Local Area Agreement, and our Sustainable Community Strategy, especially, with regard to empowering local communities and narrowing the gap between the quality of life for the residents living in the most disadvantaged areas of the Borough and the rest of Halton. Option 3 can achieve this.

5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The Council and its partners have made policy commitments to narrowing the gap between the most deprived areas and the rest of the Borough, The adoption of locality working should be aimed at addressing this, and would be consistent with government policy, for example the Communities in Control White Paper.

6.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There will be costs associated with the adoption of a locality working model. These will need to be identified as ideas are firmed up, before Executive Board are able to make a final decision on the way forward.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 **Children and Young People in Halton**

6.2 **Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton**

6.3 **A Healthy Halton**

6.4 **A Safer Halton**

6.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal**

locality working should aim to support the delivery of objectives under
all of the Council's key priority areas.

8.0 RISK ANALYSIS

The main risk is failure by the Council to deliver the desired improvements in
its five priority areas, including the targets in the current Local Area
Agreement (LAA) for which it has lead responsibility, and in the Sustainable
Community Strategy. This would be reflected in an adverse Comprehensive
Area Assessment by the Audit Commission.   The introduction of an
appropriate locality working model would be one way of mitigating this risk.

9.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

Locality working should aim to reduce geographical inequalities within
the Borough.

**10.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE
       LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Communities in Control White Paper	Municipal Building	Rob MacKenzie